



Missouri LTC Ombudsman 2011 Annual Report

October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011

The Missouri Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has offices throughout the state and is comprised of twelve and a half paid staff in nine regional programs (located with or contracted out by the Area Agencies on Aging) and four paid staff at the state level (located in the Department of Health and Senior Services). In addition to the paid staff, there are 242 volunteers who completed a training course approved by the State Ombudsman. There were 5,403 cases closed which contained 6,467 complaints during Federal Fiscal Year 2011. A closed case is a case which was resolved and required no further action on the part of the ombudsman.

"When I left the corporate world to stay at home, I was looking for a way to give back to my community. As an ombudsman, I am able to serve as an advocate and see that each person (in a long-term care facility) is treated with dignity and respect, something we all deserve."

Volunteer Ombudsman

What is an Ombudsman?

The word ombudsman (om-budz-man) is of Swedish origin and means one who speaks on behalf of another. The Missouri Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) is comprised of individuals whose main responsibility is to help residents in long-term care facilities maintain or improve their quality of life by helping ensure their rights are not violated.

FFY 2011 Complaint Highlights

Top 10 Complaints

Nursing Homes

Complaint: a concern brought to , or initiated by, the ombudsman for investigation and action by or on behalf of one or more residents of a long-term care facility relating to the health, safety, welfare or rights of a resident.

Complaint Category	Number of Complaints
#1 Failure to Respond to Requests for Assistance	495
#2 Food Service	340
#3 Exercise Preference/Choice	309
#4 Medications-Administration, Organization	290
#5 Personal Hygiene	277
#6 Dignity, Respect-Staff Attitudes	232
#7 Assistive Devices or Equipment	230
#8 Personal Property-Lost, Stolen, Destroyed, Etc.	225
#9 Resident Conflict, Including Roommates	224
#10 Air/Environment	184

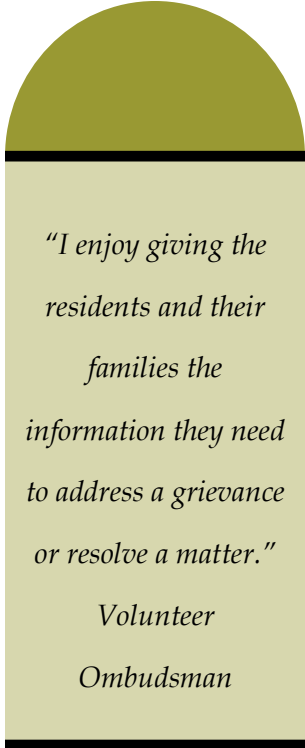
There are 529 licensed nursing homes in the state of Missouri.

FFY 2011 Complaint Highlights

Top 5 Complaints

Assisted Living/Residential Care Facilities

Complaint Category	Number of Complaints
#1 Food Service	38
#2 Medications-Administration, Organization	32
#3 Legal-Guardianship, Conservatorship, Power of Attorney, Wills	25
#4 Discharge/Eviction	21
#5 Dignity, Respect-Staff Attitudes	19
Exercise Preference/Choice	19



"I enjoy giving the residents and their families the information they need to address a grievance or resolve a matter."

Volunteer
Ombudsman

There are 607 assisted living and residential care facilities licensed in the state of Missouri.

"Resolving complaints has been the more fulfilling experience for me. I feel like I am able to ensure good care and respect for the elderly." Volunteer Ombudsman

"The most impressionable part of being an ombudsman volunteer is the need. There is so much need, and without volunteers, so much would go undone." Volunteer Ombudsman

Outcomes: Individual Advocacy

Every month, Certified Ombudsmen Volunteers receive complaints and work hard to investigate, document and assure steps are taken to resolve the problem in a timely manner, in accordance with federal and state requirements. Here are a few of their recent activities, which made a huge difference to members of this vulnerable population.

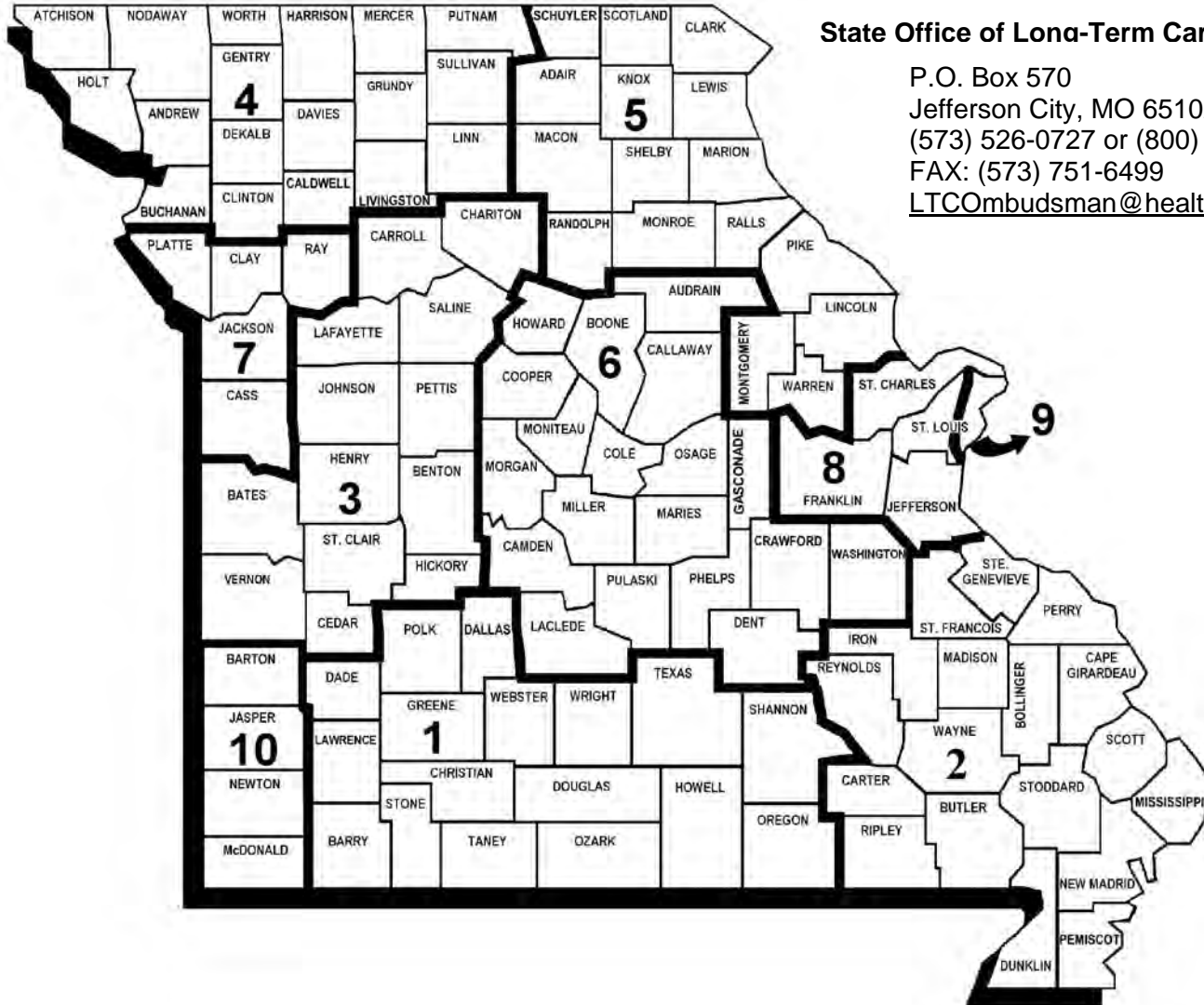
- A resident was consistently cold in the shower room. The volunteer verified the situation and, with the support of the administrator, worked with the staff to assure the heater was turned on during bathing.
- A resident ordered a product by phone and couldn't get the company to send it. The volunteer, with the aid of local news media, assisted the resident in receiving the merchandise.
- The residents were complaining about the lack of fresh foods. The volunteer worked to get a garden planted that the residents help maintain.
- A resident was told he would be evicted due to an issue over smoking. The volunteer worked with staff, and the resident was allowed to stay.
- A disabled resident needed a special air mattress to relieve her pain. The volunteer met with staff, and the resident received the appropriate mattress which relieved her pain within two days.
- The lack of current books and magazines was frustrating the residents. The volunteer worked to set up a plan whereby the activity director picked up books at the library and rotated them every six weeks.
- A resident was often woken up in the middle of the night by the bright lights the staff turned on to care for her roommate. The volunteer worked with staff to close the curtain and issue a bed-side lamp for the roommate, and now the resident is getting a better night's sleep.

Outcomes: Systemic Advocacy

There are many issues which effect all residents in a home or in a town or across the state. The following are examples of systemic advocacy done on behalf of residents.

- Several residents in multiple homes complained about the new smoking ordinance put in place by the City of St. Louis. After talking with the residents and discussing their concerns, the Ombudsman Program spoke on behalf of the residents to a subcommittee of the City Council. The result was a change in the wording of the ordinance that allows residents to smoke on the property.
- The Ombudsman Program is working with the Missouri Veteran's Commission to help identify all veterans and/or spouses living in long-term care facilities. A packet of information has been developed and is given to facility social workers. Since the VA will pay for nursing home care, this effort can assist some residents who previously were relying on Medicaid to pay.
- Culture change is about providing person directed care. LTCOP staff attends the board meetings of Missouri Coalition Celebrating Care Continuum Change (MC5), but are not board members. Several of the regional Ombudsmen are the moderators for regional meetings/trainings on the topic of culture change. We provide training for staff and residents on issues such as person directed care, staff turnover and retention, and making the nursing home more like home.
- The Best Practices committee is comprised of long-term care facility physicians, the trade associations, healthcare professionals, Primaris and other interested individuals, and is lead by staff from the Section for Long-Term Care Regulation/DRL. We have just completed an "Innovative Ideas" project and will be posting the submissions from facilities on the DHSS website.
- Individuals with mental health issues in nursing homes contact the state and regional Ombudsman offices with requests and complaints. The LTCOP has developed some training materials for staff and volunteers to use when investigating and resolving complaints. The bigger issue is that generally the nursing home staff is not trained to care for mental health clients, so the person tends to be "warehoused" rather than be receiving ongoing treatment. In addition, the regulations are written for an aging population.

Missouri Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program



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3. Care Connection for Aging Services
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4. Northwest MO Area Agency on Aging
Ombudsman Program
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CONSULTATIONS

The LTCOP responded to 1,106 consultation requests during federal fiscal year 2011 from long-term care facilities regarding resident care issues such as:

- Transfer/Discharge
- Resident Rights
- Family Issues
- Role of the Ombudsman Program

Ombudsmen provided 2,233 consultations to individuals, often by telephone. The information most frequently requested was:

- Choosing a Nursing Home
- Resident Rights
- Ways to Resolve Complaints
- Medicare and Medicaid



"Being an ombudsman runs a gauntlet of emotions, sorrow, happiness, despair, anger, work, but the best is gratification. I feel gratified with each and every visit, especially if I can help solve a problem."

Volunteer Ombudsman

For more information, or to secure the services of an Ombudsman,

WRITE or CALL

Department of Health and Senior Services



Missouri Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

P.O. Box 570

Jefferson City MO 65102

1-800-309-3282

LTCOmbudsman@health.mo.gov

<http://health.mo.gov/seniors/ombudsman/>

